



# EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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# *news digest*

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95056D

## **Browning and religious leaders express alarm over welfare and environmental legislation**

(ENS) In the wake of what they perceive as possible erosions in protection for the most vulnerable in our society and in policies protecting the environment, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning joined a group of the nation's top religious leaders in Washington, DC, to express their alarm. "There has never been a more important time for religious leadership to be here," said Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund at an opening dinner on March 29. She urged the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders to stress the "unbreakable promise" of entitlements, which she called the "single most important issue," when they met with members of Congress and the Administration. Congress should be trying to "strengthen rather than shred" protection of the nation's children which, she contended, were facing the most serious threat to their health and safety in the last 25 years.

The proposals outlined in the Republican Party's Contract With America represent "a fundamental reordering of social policy," Edelman added, "the most radical reorganization of federal policy since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt." She is convinced that "we are going to become a very different nation" if proposed legislation passes. "Your voice is more important than ever--and this is the time for you to be here," she concluded.

"We are at an absolutely crucial juncture in environmental policy," said Philip Clapp of the Environmental Protection Agency at a briefing breakfast sponsored by the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. The partnership, housed at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine, includes the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network.

Clapp said that two-thirds of the members of Congress weren't around when the environmental laws were passed so "they don't know how we got

where we are." The result is what he called "the largest special interest attack on basic environmental policy in the last 15 years" with lobbyists attacking the laws as a way of rolling back regulation. He urged the church leaders to remind members of Congress that "concern for the environment is an important issue for people of faith." And he said that it was important that "debate over the protective fabric of environmental policy should be done carefully, deliberately--and publicly."

"The environment is also a justice issue since policies affect the poor and most vulnerable in our society," Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning told an Episcopal senator, Charles Robb (D-VA). "We come with a deep concern, hoping that we can coax you into slowing things down and taking a closer look at the long-range impact."

95057D

## **Anglican primates wrestle with issues of leadership, evangelism and sexuality**

(ENS) At a private, week-long meeting on the grounds of Windsor Castle outside of London, the primates of the Anglican Communion wrestled with issues of leadership, evangelism, human rights and sexuality--and discussed plans for the 1998 Lambeth Conference of bishops.

"Our being together has strengthened our vision in Christ and renewed our desire to improve our structures, leadership and communication," the leaders said in a pastoral letter released March 16. "Among the concerns we have addressed are the restructuring of the church for mission in the face of secularism, including consideration of the Decade of Evangelism."

The letter said that the primates felt "challenged by the denial of human rights, often leading to the displacement of people and the explosion of refugee populations, and by the persistence of poverty, racism, sexism, and tribalism in the midst of political and human strife." They gave thanks for the "moral and political miracle in South Africa," and the progress towards peace in Northern Ireland, but they also expressed distress over "the suffering in Rwanda--a dramatic symbol of the crucifixion which is central to our faith."

The pastoral letter said that the primates were "conscious that within the church itself there are those whose pattern of sexual expression is at variance with the received Christian moral tradition but whose lives in other respects demonstrate the marks of genuine Christian character." While acknowledging that the issues are "deep and complex," the primates urged careful reflection on sexuality issues "in the light of the Scriptures and the Christian moral tradition," but with "honesty and integrity, avoiding



unnecessary confrontation and polarization, in a spirit of faithful seeking to understand more clearly the will of God for our lives as Christians."

"We reject homophobia in any form," Carey said at a closing press conference. "Homosexuals must be treated as people made in the image and likeness of God," he said, adding that sexuality issues must take into account human experience as well as biblical teaching.

Archbishop Keith Rayner of Australia said that the church is "finding there are people whose lives show all the marks of Christian character and yet in some way are not conforming" to the traditional understanding of Christian sexuality. He said that scientific study and human experience had to be taken into account, "just as the church has had to modify its views on marriage and divorce in the light of human experience." Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning added, "Before we can wrestle with the issue of practicing homosexuals, we have to wrestle with the issue of same-sex unions." By addressing the possibility that two people could live in a life-long committed relationship, "that would say something about how we saw that lifestyle and about the holiness of that lifestyle," he said.

95058D

## **Vital Anglican presence planned for Beijing women's summit**

(ENS) In September Anglican and Episcopal women will travel to Beijing, China, to join diplomats and advocates from all over the world for the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women. The Anglican group, which will attend the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) forum of the conference, recently held a planning and orientation meeting at the Episcopal Church Center in New York.

"It is vital to have a strong Anglican presence in Beijing," said Ann Smith, executive director of the Women in Mission and Ministry (WIMM) office that hosted the orientation. "We hope to bring our own unique spirituality to the mix."

The Beijing NGO conference, on the theme *Looking at the world through women's eyes*, is a continuation of work begun at the United Nations Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, and strengthened by the subsequent Anglican Encounters in Brazil in 1992 and Honduras in 1995. "The conference, which could draw over 30,000 participants, is equally important for those at home as a means for deepening our understanding of the communion to which we all belong," Smith said. "We are not the church isolated. We are not women alone. We are worldwide and united."

95059D

## **Apaches get support from NCC's Racial Justice Working Group**

(ENS) Geronimo's band of Chiricahua Apaches was the last band of free Indians to resist U. S. government aggression in the battlefield. Descendants resisting "desecration" of Mount Graham, a sacred Apache mountain, adjacent to the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona, have garnered support in their cause from the Racial Justice Working Group of National Council of Churches in Christ.

Convened in late March in the rugged "Indian Country" in southeast Arizona for its semi-annual meeting, the working group called for return of the mountain to the Apaches and removal of the giant telescopes built by the University of Arizona in collaboration with international partners, including the Vatican.

"The unanimously passed resolution states our conviction that the presence of the telescopes represents a serious violation of traditional Apache religious beliefs," said Dr. Carol Hampton, the Episcopal Church's field officer for the congregational ministry cluster and co-convenor of the working group. "As a full measure of justice, the mountain should be returned to the Apache. Short of an outright, and unlikely, return the Apaches should have unimpeded access and the telescopes should be removed," she said.

95060D

## **UN Social Summit issues alarm on worldwide poverty**

(ENS) Drawing inspiration from the progress made worldwide by the women's and environmental movements, the United Nations Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, March 6-12, ended with an appeal to the countries of the world to finally overcome the scourge of poverty. Juan Somavia, Chilean ambassador to the U.N and chair of the committee that organized the summit, declared that "the essence of the summit is a cry of alarm. We are facing a moral crisis in the world. The idea that poverty is the fault of the poor is prevailing. The summit breaks that mode of thinking," he said.

The summit, the largest gathering of world leaders in history, brought



together 40,000 representatives (including 120 kings, presidents, premiers and foreign ministers who arrived in the final days to sign the closing document) to both the summit and the parallel forum of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) meeting nearby. "The significant thing about the summit is that all these countries must now go back and address their priorities," said Bishop James Ottley, Anglican Observer to the United Nation, who led an Anglican delegation that participated in the NGO forum and monitored the summit. "Will the countries put their resources behind arms or towards the elimination of poverty?"

The summit's official document listed three ambitious objectives: eradicate absolute poverty, find work for the 120 million unemployed (about 30 per cent of the world's work force), and narrow the equality gap so that those marginalized by poverty, gender, race, age, disability, religion and ethnicity are allowed to take their place in society. Five organizations at the NGO forum drafted the Copenhagen Alternative Declaration, signed by over 600 NGOs. This document stressed other issues: immediate unconditional cancellation of bilateral, multilateral and commercial debts of poor nations; independent review and audit of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; and the need to empower women and end violence and discrimination against them.

95061D

## **Evangelist Billy Graham beams message to a billion people around the world**

(ENS) Down-to-earth evangelist Billy Graham recently beamed his image and message to tens of millions of people in 185 countries via satellite and television technology. Though his body was situated in only one place--Hiram Bithorn Stadium in San Juan, Puerto Rico--his face and words were broadcast to 3,000 centers worldwide, and translated into 116 languages.

"No matter what language you speak," proclaimed the 76 year-old evangelist during the satellite broadcast, "no matter what culture you're from, no matter what situation you find yourself in--all around the world, come and give your heart to Christ." The invitation was traditional. The difference was that this time it appeared on big screens in all 29 time zones. Many participants responded by approaching the screens, reaching out to someone who was on the other side of the planet.

More than one billion people will eventually hear Graham's message during broadcasts in the week of Easter in prime-time on national television

networks in 117 countries, from Nepal and Malaysia to the troubled regions of Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Haiti.

95062D

## **Religious communities can be "radical," superiors assert**

(ENS) In clothing ranging from Levi Dockers, sport shirts, wool skirts and sweaters to coarse-spun monks habits, wimples and gowns, the 20 superiors of the Anglican monasteries and convents in North America finished a week-long conference at the Community of the Transfiguration near Cincinnati in mid-March, convinced they are "radical" and have a defined mission in the Anglican Communion.

"In many ways we are counter-cultural people," said Brother William Sibley, superior of the Order of the Holy Cross, based in Santa Barbara, California. "There is a freedom in this communal life that not everybody has to do the same thing. There is a sense of prophecy by living this lifestyle, that hopefully has something to say to the church--but more importantly for the sake of the world."

They believe their vows of chastity, poverty and obedience are appropriately radical and counter-cultural, and that their life together, "in worship, prayer, and ministry to others," is a prophetic witness to how the church can operate in the world. In the publication *Religious Life*, Brother Martin Smith of the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Boston wrote last year: "Religious communities will either play a significant role as signs of the newness of God's kingdom shaping our lives, or they could fade as marginal survivors of an ecclesiastical era that is over."

Despite dwindling numbers and aging populations, the superiors see their orders adapting to the needs of people in late-20th century culture. Many of their ministries have changed, from primarily running institutions, such as schools, to offering havens of retreat and spiritual direction in a fast-paced, stressful society. "Most Anglican or Episcopal orders have a growth industry in retreat work," said Mother Madeleine Mary of the Community of the Holy Spirit in New York.



95063D

## **Church leaders warn of eroding commitment to better climate**

(END) A World Council of Churches representative at the Berlin Climate Change summit recently warned that industrialized countries are preparing a secret deal that will represent "a betrayal of their ethical responsibility." David Hallman, coordinator of the 15-member WCC team at the summit, said that "if the deal went through, it would result in an extremely severe loss of momentum for the convention [on climate change], time that we cannot afford to lose given the known impact of climate change that small island peoples are already beginning to experience."

The proposed deal would mean that there would be no reference to the "goal of reductions" of greenhouse gas emissions by industrialized countries, according to Hallman. The WCC and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the Alliance of Small Island States, have called on industrialized countries to agree to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by the year 2005.

Christine Von Weizsaecker, a German scientist who is part of the WCC delegation, reported that the industrialized countries were preparing to export nuclear technology to developing countries as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries could take place as part of a controversial scheme known as "joint initiatives."

95056

## **Browning and religious leaders express alarm over welfare and environmental legislation**

**by James Solheim**

(ENS) In the wake of what they perceive as possible erosions in protection for the most vulnerable in our society and in policies protecting the environment, some of the nation's top religious leaders spent two days in Washington, DC, expressing their alarm.

"There has never been a more important time for religious leadership to be here," said Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund at an opening dinner on March 29. She urged the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish leaders to stress the "unbreakable promise" of entitlements, which she called the "single most important issue," when they met with members of Congress and the Administration. Congress should be trying to "strengthen rather than shred" protection of the nation's children which, she contended, were facing the most serious threat to their health and safety in the last 25 years. She said that it was especially important for the church leaders to "keep a positive vision," even in the face of what she believes is "a massive assault on children."

The proposals outlined in the Republican Party's Contract With America represent "a fundamental reordering of social policy," Edelman added, "the most radical reorganization of federal policy since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt." She is convinced that "we are going to become a very different nation" if proposed legislation passes. "Your voice is more important than ever--and this is the time for you to be here," she concluded.

### **Crucial juncture for environmental policy**

"We are at an absolutely crucial juncture in environmental policy," said Philip Clapp of the Environmental Protection Agency at a briefing breakfast sponsored by the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. The partnership, housed at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine, includes the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, and the Evangelical Environmental Network.

Clapp said that two-thirds of the members of Congress weren't around when the environmental laws were passed so "they don't know how we got where we are." The result is what he called "the largest special interest attack on basic environmental policy in the last 15 years" with lobbyists attacking the



laws as a way of rolling back regulation. He urged the church leaders to remind members of Congress that "concern for the environment is an important issue for people of faith." And he said that it was important that "debate over the protective fabric of environmental policy should be done carefully, deliberately--and publicly."

The leaders were warned that it was crucial that they not be seen as the religious caucus of the environmental movement or just another special interest group. The key was helping those who make the laws to slow down and recognize the long-term implications of what they were doing. "Go about your task with courage and the knowledge that we are going to win a lot of these battles," coached Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "The bi-partisan coalition of decent government leaders that was tapped in the past is still there."

### **Where have you been?**

Those in Congress who have the strongest record in favor of environmental protection scolded church leaders for what Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE) called their "silence." He said that it was "reassuring to know that you are finally in the game." Agreeing with his guests that it is a critical time since everything but the Clean Air Act is up for reconsideration, or "reauthorization," Biden said that he was frustrated by how little attention is being paid to the issues and the lack of any intelligent debate. "The American public is going to figure this out soon--and they will be very angry." He warned against "underestimating the amount of intellectual firepower gathering on the right--but it's still big ideas that change our nation."

"I hope you mean what you say because I'm going to hold you accountable, as I hope you will hold me accountable," said Biden, who describes himself as a "good Catholic Senator" who goes to mass every week. "But when is the last time you heard someone stand up in a pulpit and talk about the rape of the earth?" he demanded.

Paul Gorman, executive director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, quickly pointed out that over 53,000 kits on environmental issues have been mailed to congregations across the country in anticipation of the 25th anniversary of Earth Day April 22--including the parishes in Episcopal Church. He expressed a hope that the church could be a "moderating voice" in what is shaping up as a highly polarized, partisan debate.

### **Environment as a justice issue**

"The environment is also a justice issue since policies affect the poor

and most vulnerable in our society," Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning told Episcopal senator, Charles Robb (D-VA). "We come with a deep concern, hoping that we can coax you into slowing things down and taking a closer look at the long-range impact."

Trying to be encouraging, Robb said, "In the end, reason and justice prevail more often than not. He welcomed the visit and the concern over an issue "not always associated with the religious community."

Bishop Melvin Talbert of the Methodist Church, president-elect of the National Council of Churches (NCC), said that member churches of the NCC had called for prayer and fasting during Holy Week, "part of a deep tradition that belongs to the religious community."

"I hope you will spread the word how much has been accomplished by the environmental movement--and not by just a bunch of tree-huggers," Senator John Chafee (R-RI), an Episcopalian who chairs the Environment and Public Works Committee, said in welcoming the group. He pointed out that, as one direct result of regulation, there has been a 98 percent reduction in lead in gasoline and 65 percent of our lakes and streams can be fished again. He agreed with his colleagues that the Senate, which he called a "cooling saucer," will take its time before agreeing to major changes in environmental regulation.

Church leaders also met with Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and with officials at the Civil Rights Commission and the White House Task Force on Welfare Reform.

**--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's office of news and information.**

95057

## **Anglican primates wrestle with issues of leadership, evangelism and sexuality**

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with issues of leadership, evangelism, human rights and sexuality--and discussed plans for the 1998 Lambeth Conference of bishops.

"Our being together has strengthened our vision in Christ and renewed our desire to improve our structures, leadership and communication," the leaders said in a pastoral letter (full text in Newsfeatures) released March 16. "Among the concerns we have addressed are the restructuring of the church for mission in the face of secularism, including consideration of the Decade of Evangelism."

The letter said that the primates felt "challenged by the denial of human rights, often leading to the displacement of people and the explosion of refugee populations, and by the persistence of poverty, racism, sexism, and tribalism in the midst of political and human strife." They gave thanks for the "moral and political miracle in South Africa," and the progress towards peace in Northern Ireland, but they also expressed distress over "the suffering in Rwanda--a dramatic symbol of the crucifixion which is central to our faith." Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey will lead a delegation to Rwanda.

### **Sexuality issues intrude on meeting**

The pastoral letter said that the primates were "conscious that within the church itself there are those whose pattern of sexual expression is at variance with the received Christian moral tradition but whose lives in other respects demonstrate the marks of genuine Christian character." While acknowledging that the issues are "deep and complex," the primates urged careful reflection on sexuality issues "in the light of the Scriptures and the Christian moral tradition," but with "honesty and integrity, avoiding unnecessary confrontation and polarization, in a spirit of faithful seeking to understand more clearly the will of God for our lives as Christians."

During the meeting, an organization called Outrage! attempted to pressure the bishop of London, David Hope, into admitting that he is a homosexual. In the face of the implied threats, the bishop called a news conference and said he had "from the beginning chosen to lead a single, celibate life" and that he was "not a sexually active person," although confessing some "ambiguity" about his sexual orientation.

The primates issued a letter of support, expressing their "solidarity in deploring this reprehensible intrusion into your private life. We assure you as a body that we stand against this kind of provocation."

### **Made in the image of God**

"We reject homophobia in any form," Carey said at a closing press conference. "Homosexuals must be treated as people made in the image and

likeness of God," he said, adding that sexuality issues must take into account human experience as well as biblical teaching.

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Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning added, "Before we can wrestle with the issue of practicing homosexuals, we have to wrestle with the issue of same-sex unions." By addressing the possibility that two people could live in a life-long committed relationship, "that would say something about how we saw that lifestyle and about the holiness of that lifestyle."

Browning said in an interview that there was "a great sense of anger" among the primates over the treatment of the bishop of London. But he added that he was impressed with the quality and depth of discussions around sexuality issues, including issues that have made some primates uncomfortable at previous meetings. "For too long we have either dodged the issues or been unwilling to face up to them," he said.

**--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's office of news and information.**

95058

## **Vital Anglican presence planned for Beijing women's summit**

**by Lucy Germany**

(ENS) In September Anglican and Episcopal women will travel to Beijing, China, to join diplomats and advocates from all over the world for the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women. The Anglican group, which will attend the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) forum of the Beijing conference, recently held a planning and orientation meeting at the Episcopal Church Center in New York.

"It is vital to have a strong Anglican presence in Beijing," said Ann Smith, executive director of the Women in Mission and Ministry (WIMM)



office that hosted the orientation. "We hope to bring our own unique spirituality to the mix."

The Beijing NGO conference, on the theme *Looking at the world through women's eyes*, is a continuation of work begun at the United Nations Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, and strengthened by the subsequent Anglican Encounters in Brazil in 1992 and Honduras in 1995. "The conference, which could draw over 30,000 participants, is equally important for those at home as a means for deepening our understanding of the communion to which we all belong," Smith said. "We are not the church isolated. We are not women alone. We are worldwide and united."

### **Beginning at the grassroots**

The planning meeting marked the initial work of the newly established Anglican Women's Network that connects women worldwide. The network will help Anglican women have more of an impact in Beijing than they had at the Nairobi conference in 1985. "There was no Anglican Women's Network in Nairobi," said Rose Maliaman, coordinator of women's work in the Church in the Philippines. "This is changing. We have input from all over the world here. The network is a woman-to-woman base that begins at the grassroots, then becomes global."

Planning for the Beijing Conference took place in four major areas: hospitality, issues, spirituality and communications. At least 25 major issue areas were identified, including migrant workers, violence against women and children, economic justice (and injustice), militarism, aging, population, unequal distribution of the world's goods, portrayal of women by the media, and sexual exploitation.

Pat Harris, former president of the 750,000-member Mother's Union, an international Anglican group that claims to be the largest church-related body in the world, told the 30 orientation participants that her organization will produce a logo that emphasizes the diversity and interconnectedness of Anglican women. The logo will be used in a variety of ways to underscore the Anglican presence at the Beijing conference.

### **Send a sister to Beijing**

Orientation leaders urged individuals and organizations to help send as many women representing as many diverse areas of the church's work as possible to Beijing. A campaign seeking funds for travel scholarships, *Send a Sister to Beijing*, has been launched by the Council for Women's Ministries of the Episcopal Church. Inquiries and donations should be addressed to Ann Smith, WIMM office, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Ave. New York,

NY 10017.

"The Beijing Conference is for all women," said Smith, who called it "a spectacular display of unity in diversity which will accomplish important advances towards equality, development and peace. It is not only a gathering of radical feminists but an opportunity for the perspective of all seriously concerned women to be brought to bear on global issues," she said.

Smith did express concern over reports that the NGO forum will be moved to a tourist area 30 miles away, a move supported by the Vatican because of its fears over how participants would deal with the abortion issue. "This is a move to block the influence of NGOs on the summit," she said. "The NGOS can speak for concerns at the grassroots level and address the needs for change."

--Lucy Germany is a freelance writer from Texas.

95059

## **Apaches get support from NCC's Racial Justice Working Group**

**by Owanah Anderson**

(ENS) Geronimo's band of Chiricahua Apaches was the last band of free Indians to resist U. S. government aggression in the battlefield. Descendants resisting "desecration" of Mount Graham, a sacred Apache mountain adjacent to the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona, have garnered support in their cause from the Racial Justice Working Group of National Council of Churches in Christ.

Convened in late March in the rugged "Indian Country" in southeast Arizona for its semi-annual meeting, the working group called for return of the mountain to the Apaches and removal of the giant telescopes built by the University of Arizona in collaboration with international partners, including the Vatican.

"The unanimously passed resolution states our conviction that the presence of the telescopes represents a serious violation of traditional Apache religious beliefs," said Dr. Carol Hampton, the Episcopal Church's field



officer for the congregational ministry cluster and co-convenor of the working group. "As a full measure of justice, the mountain should be returned to the Apache. Short of an outright, and unlikely, return the Apache should have unimpeded access and the telescopes should be removed," she said.

**"That mountain is our identity"**

Forty members of the working group travelled the 30-mile winding road to the top of Mount Graham which rises 10,700 feet from the Sonoran desert floor. After negotiations with observatory officials a host of Apache elders, family groups and individuals characterized by many of their opponents as "activists" were permitted to accompany the church group to the mountain top.

Few Apaches ventured into the interior of the Mount Graham International Observatory facilities for a guided tour by university astronomers. Instead the Apache elders stood in a circle in the snow covered parking area surrounded by giant old-growth fir trees and two colossal telescope structures. An Apache medicine man, Harry Benito, led a traditional religious ceremony; the pungent aroma of smoldering sage and cedar permeated the thin mountain air. Apache women, shivering in traditional long cotton "Apache camp dresses," pulled bright shawls closer around their shoulders. Youthful uniformed and armed U.S. Forest Service personnel, stationed at the outer edge of the sacred circle, stood alert beside Blazers. Inside the vehicles were watchful German shepherd guard dogs.

Traditionalists have identified Mount Graham as the home of Mountain Spirit Dancers (called Crown Dancers by non-Apaches), said to have taught the early Apaches their sacred songs and dances and where to find healing herbs and waters. Apache elders say the mountain accommodates many secret shrines, some dating back 1,000 years.

"My grandparents used to call down the Mountain Spirits for traditional healing ceremonies," said Wendsler Nosie, a job trainer and activist in his mid-30s who has lived his entire life on the reservation except for a few years in a California college. "That mountain is our identity."

Adjusting the blue bandanna tied low on his forehead (like Geronimo's famous--and only--photograph), Nosie continued, "Our reservation shrunk. The government changed the line and then the mountain was outside the San Carlos Reservation." The mountain was expropriated in 1873 without compensation by administrative order of the U.S. government and given to white settlers who had swooped in to mine the mountains and farm the rich Gila River valley where Apaches had been cultivating irrigated gardens for centuries before the white man came.

### **Radar on Church of the Holy Sepulcher?**

The most outspoken of the dozen Apache women accompanying the church leaders, Sandra Rambler, is still outraged that two Jesuit priests "with Vatican approval, submitted affidavits in a law suit saying our sacred mountain is not really sacred." Rambler quoted the novelist, Tony Hillerman, a Roman Catholic, as saying that building the telescope on Mount Graham would be like the Israeli military putting radar antennas on top of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

Congress in 1988 approved construction of three Mount Graham telescopes on 8.6 acres of U.S. Forest Service land, without, according to the Apache Survival Coalition, "appropriate notification to all parties." The American Indian Religious Freedom Act, enacted in 1978, had "no teeth" and was useless in halting an incursion on Mount Graham. For five years, solid efforts were exerted to amend and strengthen the religious freedom act; one provision of the proposed legislation spoke specifically to sacred sites. The only section of the four-point religious freedom legislation to be enacted by Congress last year was the peyote section, which relates directly to the Native American Church.

The Episcopal Church voted in the Phoenix General Convention in 1991 to support efforts at local, state and national levels to ensure American Indian religious freedom "identifying the practice of religion as a fundamental human and civil right."

### **Every society needs sacred places**

The resolution passed by Racial Justice Working Group, calling for removal of the telescopes and return of the mountain to the Apache, labeled the telescopes as a "serious violation of Apache traditional religious beliefs and called on the University of Arizona to recognize and respect the religious beliefs, practices and traditions of the Apache."

"We were touched deeply by the respect these Christian Church people demonstrated to us," said Nosie. "What touched us most was that this church organization would stand in solidarity with us." A lithe man with flashing black eyes and a quick smile, Nosie then spoke of "many different trails which lead to God."

As Indian author Vine Deloria, Jr., warned years ago, every society needs sacred places. A society that cannot remember its past and honor it, he said, is in peril of losing its soul.

**--Owanah Anderson is the Episcopal Church's officer for Indian Ministries.**



95060

## **UN Social Summit issues alarm on worldwide poverty**

**by Jack Donovan**

(ENS) Drawing inspiration from the progress made worldwide by the women's and environmental movements, the United Nations Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, ended March 12 with an appeal to the countries of the world to finally overcome the scourge of poverty. Juan Somovia, Chilean ambassador to the U.N and chair of the committee that organized the summit, declared that "the essence of the summit is a cry of alarm. We are facing a moral crisis in the world. The idea that poverty is the fault of the poor is prevailing. The summit breaks that mode of thinking," he said.

The summit, the largest gathering of world leaders in history (including 120 kings, presidents, premiers and foreign ministers who arrived in the final days to sign the closing document), brought together 40,000 representatives to both the summit and the parallel forum of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) meeting nearby. "The significant thing about the summit is that all these countries must now go back and address their priorities," said Bishop James Ottley, Anglican Observer to the United Nation, who led an Anglican delegation that participated in the NGO forum and monitored the summit. "Will the countries put their resources behind arms or towards the elimination of poverty?"

The summit's official document listed three ambitious objectives: eradicate absolute poverty, find work for the 120 million unemployed (about 30 per cent of the world's work force), and narrow the equality gap so that those marginalized by poverty, gender, race, age, disability, religion and ethnicity are allowed to take their place in society.

According to statistics often cited at the summit, more than one billion people worldwide live in absolute poverty, a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs like food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information. "The priority is to eradicate absolute poverty," Somovia said. "It should not exist. You can't wish it away, you can't legislate it away, but you can set standards. The U.N. is a standard-setting organization. So to deal with poverty, we are going to start with absolute poverty. It must die," he said.

### **Document stops short**

Dr. Jeff Golliher, Ottley's staff person on the environment, said that

while many agreed on the objectives contained in the final document, the preceding discussion "wasn't broad or in-depth enough. It was clear even going into the conference that the summit itself wasn't going to address many of the concerns that the NGOs felt were important."

For this reason, the World Council of Churches, with which Ottley worked closely during the summit, joined over 600 other nongovernmental organizations to endorse the Copenhagen Alternative Declaration. This document, which had been drafted by five organizations at the NGO forum, stressed other issues: immediate unconditional cancellation of bilateral, multilateral and commercial debts of poor nations; independent review and audit of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; and the need to empower women and end violence and discrimination against them. The Alternative Declaration also derided the official text for the idea that social policy could be reduced to "a social safety net" in which the state withdraws from its role as a social service provider.

Delegation member Don Cichelli, executive assistant to Ottley, said that the document was significant because "if the NGOs didn't say anything, it would be a de facto endorsement of the official document. By producing the Alternative Declaration, the NGOs told the government representatives that they were signing a troubled, inadequate document."

"It was a very hopeful sign that such an overwhelming majority of NGOs raised the issue of the need to monitor the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund," Golliher added. "The U.N. doesn't know exactly what to do. No one does. We need as many voices as possible to describe the nature of this problem so that we can move from a state of chaos."

### **Future influence**

Lloyd Casson, Episcopal Church Center staff consultant in the peace and justice ministry cluster, noted that he came away from the summit with at least one hopeful sign--that the Anglican Communion has a future as an NGO. "The fact that Bishop Ottley, as Anglican Observer, has the opportunity to relate to each of the primates in the communion, and that the primates are so close to the socio-economic situation in their areas, means that he can be in reasonable touch with the needs and concerns of those regions and accurately represent the 70 million members of the communion to the U.N.," he said.

Ottley agreed. "One of the wonderful things about this small group (the Anglican Communion) is that it is found in every country in the world. If we can develop an awareness of what's happening at the local level, then we can present an organized voice to meetings like the upcoming Fourth World



Conference on Women in Beijing. And we can make a difference."

--Jack Donovan is communications assistant in the Episcopal Church's office of news and information.

95061

## **Evangelist Billy Graham beams message to a billion people around the world**

**by Jack Donovan**

(ENS) Down-to-earth evangelist Billy Graham recently beamed his image and message to tens of millions of people in 185 countries via satellite and television technology. Though his body was situated in only one place--Hiram Bithorn Stadium in San Juan, Puerto Rico--his face and words were broadcast to 3,000 centers worldwide, and translated into 116 languages.

"No matter what language you speak," proclaimed the 76 year-old evangelist during the satellite broadcast, "no matter what culture you're from, no matter what situation you find yourself in--all around the world, come and give your heart to Christ." The invitation was traditional. The difference was that this time it appeared on big screens in all 29 time zones. Many participants responded by approaching the screens, reaching out to someone who was on the other side of the planet.

More than one billion people will eventually hear Graham's message during broadcasts in the week of Easter in prime-time on national television networks in 117 countries, from Nepal and Malaysia to the troubled regions of Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Haiti.

Among those attending the crusade in San Juan was Dr. Peter Kuzmic, president of the Protestant Evangelical Council of Bosnia and Croatia who said, "Only three years ago over 150,000 shells almost destroyed my city in eight months," he said. "And now every night hundreds of individuals are being embraced by the saving love of Jesus through the preaching of the 'good news.' It truly is good news for bad times in Croatia, Bosnia and other parts of our broken world."

### **Global Mission Village**

Before the outreach began, a "Global Mission Village" was constructed by a team of volunteers. "The process has been like building an entire television network headquarters and earth station in a week's time, using it for 10 days and then tearing it all down," explained Greg Fessing, who along with his brother Roger was in charge of the TV project.

"Even the television industry acknowledges that this is the biggest point-to-point relay around the world of its kind in history," said David Rennie, a British electronics engineer who has worked with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association for many years and who traveled from London to work as a consultant for the event. "There are those who are experts in the field of satellite communications who said that a project as complex as this just could not be done, but we have done it--for the glory of God," he said.

--Jack Donovan is communications assistant in the Episcopal Church's office of news and information.

95062

## **Religious communities can be "radical," superiors assert**

**By Mike Barwell**

(ENS) Basking in the warm sunlight of an early spring afternoon, shuffling into position for a group photograph, the 20 men and women, eager to go to lunch, smiled shyly as they were coaxed to move closer together.

In clothing ranging from Levi Dockers, sports shirts, wool skirts and sweaters to coarse-spun monks habits, wimples and gowns, the superiors of the Anglican monasteries and convents in North America finished a week-long conference at the Community of the Transfiguration near Cincinnati in mid-March, convinced they are "radical" and have a defined mission in the Anglican Communion.

"In many ways we are counter-cultural people," said Brother William Sibley, superior of the Order of the Holy Cross, based in Santa Barbara, California. "There is a freedom in this communal life that not everybody has



to do the same thing. There is a sense of prophecy by living this lifestyle, that hopefully has something to say to the church--but more importantly for the sake of the world."

### **Truly radical lifestyles**

The annual gathering of the Conference on the Religious Life in the Anglican Communion in North America (CORL) also was a rare sighting. With only about 450 life-professed members in more than 20 monasteries and convents in the United States and Canada, monks and nuns are not often considered part of the mainstream of the Episcopal Church. They rarely meet in a large group.

If they are considered at all, they are usually dismissed as anomalies: costumed, traditionalist, conservative, inflexible, isolated, and out of touch with modern life and unwilling to deal with the issues of society.

That is not how they see themselves.

They believe their vows of chastity, poverty and obedience are appropriately radical and counter-cultural, and that their life together, "in worship, prayer, and ministry to others," is a prophetic witness to how the church can operate in the world.

### **New role or marginal survivors?**

In the publication *Religious Life*, Brother Martin Smith of the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Boston wrote last year: "Religious communities will either play a significant role as signs of the newness of God's kingdom shaping our lives, or they could fade as marginal survivors of an ecclesiastical era that is over."

Despite dwindling numbers and aging populations, the superiors see their orders adapting to the needs of people in late-20th century culture. Many of their ministries have changed, from primarily running institutions, such as schools, to offering havens of retreat and spiritual direction in a fast-paced, stressful society. "Most Anglican or Episcopal orders have a growth industry in retreat work," said Mother Madeleine Mary of the Community of the Holy Spirit in New York.

"Twenty years ago we used to fill weekend retreats with groups, and the rest of the week it was like a tomb," Sibley added. "Now we are booked every weekend, in some cases through 1997, and we do groups of 16-18 people throughout the week. A lot of people come because they hear this is a safe place."

### **Willing to face issues**

While they would not be entirely in agreement, they also are willing to squarely face the challenges of modern society and the potentially divisive issues in the church.

"Different communities would have different positions on the issues facing the church," Sibley admitted, adding that Holy Cross has "been there in civil rights movement, for women's ordination, for gay and lesbian people. We haven't always been in total agreement, but there seems to be a convergence of thinking that we need all these issues to affirm our call to stand with the oppressed."

"Prayer and the issues of justice and peace cannot be separated," Sibley added. "I hate it when people say that because you are in the monastery you are not in this world. We are all incarnational. All the things that ordinary people face we face."

Sister Adele Marie, superior of the Society of St. Margaret in Boston, was more circumspect. "We have a variety of opinions on the issues facing the church. But one of our significant contributions to the life of the church is that over a major issue--and certainly the issue of women's ordination was such an issue and we took some number of years to work through it--the community did not split or divide. We stayed together. We can agree to continue to live together and to live in love and respect one another in spite of major differences. And that in itself is a witness."

"Religious communities have always been, since their inception--certainly in Anglicanism--cities of refuge, a place where people could come and be safe for all kinds of reasons," said Brother Richard Johns of Salt Springs Island, British Columbia, who serves as general secretary of CORL. "Certainly, in men's communities, for a very long time--or perhaps always--there aren't many places where males of homosexual orientation have been welcome. Historically, the religious communities have provided that, no questions asked, no expectations."

### **A gift to the church**

What grieves the religious community, they agreed, is the polarization of the church into liberal and conservative camps over various issues. Many of the religious communities believe they are living into the Anglican *via media* in which they can say, "Yes, we disagree theologically, but we can still live together in community in prayer." And they believe that is a gift the religious communities offer to the church today.

Sister Constance Joanna, superior of the Community of St. John the Divine in Toronto, concluded that the health of religious communities



"provides a way for people in the church to see a different way of looking at Christian life, where not everything has to be decided, where you don't have to take a stand on every issue before you can live peaceably in community and creatively."

--Mike Barwell is director of communications for the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

95063

## **Church leaders warn of eroding commitment to better climate**

(END) A World Council of Churches representative at the Berlin Climate Change summit recently warned that industrialized countries are preparing a secret deal that will represent "a betrayal of their ethical responsibility."

David Hallman, coordinator of the 15-member WCC team at the summit, said that "if the deal went through, it would result in an extremely severe loss of momentum for the convention [on climate change], time that we cannot afford to lose given the known impact of climate change that small island peoples are already beginning to experience."

The proposed deal would mean that there would be no reference to the "goal of reductions" of greenhouse gas emissions by industrialized countries, according to Hallman. The WCC and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the Alliance of Small Island States, have called on industrialized countries to agree to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by the year 2005.

G-24, a negotiating committee comprised of representatives of 24 industrialized and developing countries, was set up to try to reach agreement after a week of deadlock in the face of the refusal by industrialized countries, led by the United States, to agree to reductions in their carbon dioxide emissions. According to Hallman, G-24 members have been forbidden from talking to people outside the G-24 about the progress of negotiations. But he said that, according to "reliable information" leaked to NGOs, the

industrialized countries, in particular the United States and Australia, were presenting developing countries represented at the G-24 meeting with a "take-it-or-leave-it" position.

### **Nuclear solution**

Christine Von Weizsaecker, a German scientist who was part of the WCC delegation, reported that the industrialized countries were preparing to export nuclear technology to developing countries as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries could take place as part of a controversial scheme known as "joint initiatives," which is currently under discussion in Berlin.

"What industrialized countries interested in nuclear technology will do is to make a link between reduction targets and joint implementation plus technology transfer, without excluding the nuclear option. I think the nuclear option will only be mentioned after we have the Non-Proliferation Treaty signed in the near future," Von Weizsaecker said.

Von Weizsaecker pointed to remarks made at a press conference by the president of the Federation of German Industry, Hans-Olaf Henkel, in which "he very strongly pushed the nuclear option and added to his written text the words: 'The instrument of joint initiatives must be seen in this context.'"

"I wouldn't like to see within 10 years a tragic situation where we will have to choose between climate threats such as flooding, desertification, hurricanes, on the one hand, and nuclear threats on the other," Von Weizsaecker said. She called for investment in "least cost planning, in co-generation, in renewables and demand-side measures."

Henkel said that "in 1994, 432 nuclear power stations in 30 countries generated enough electricity to avoid 2.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide--that is ten percent of global carbon dioxide emissions. Without a substantial contribution from nuclear energy there is no prospect of success in reducing carbon dioxide emissions, either in Germany or globally."

Rafe Pomerance, the U.S. negotiator at the Berlin conference, declined to speculate on whether joint initiative agreements would allow the export of nuclear technology by Germany or Japan.

**--based on reports from Stephen Brown of Ecumenical News International.**





## *news briefs*

95064

### **COCU leader: ecumenical movement regaining momentum**

(ENS) At the conclusion of the sixth consultation of United and Uniting Churches, Dr. Daniell Hamby, an Episcopalian who is general secretary of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), said that "our so-called ecumenical winter seems to be melting in many parts of the world. There are growing numbers of ecumenical endeavors in which families of faith are discovering unity in shared witness, mission, ministry and liturgical life." He said that the consultation, which drew 55 participants from 25 countries, was "one of the most positive and important attempts to recapture the momentum of the one ecumenical movement--and to enlarge its vision." Drawing on international examples, Hamby said that he is encouraged that ecumenical conversations in the United States like COCU, "which has occasionally languished over matters of orders and the reconciliation of ministries," will get new energy. "The Porvoo agreement, now under consideration between Anglicans and Lutherans in the Nordic countries, may provide a way forward for us." The Rev. Dr. Rena Karefa-Smart of Maryland, a member of the Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, urged the consultation to embrace a more prophetic role in the search for unity, identifying the major stumbling block as a narrow denominationalism that preserves the ethics of denominations often at the expense of the ethics of the Gospel.

### **Ecumenical patriarch defended from Muslim critics**

(END) Following demonstrations by Muslim extremists outside the offices of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul, his representative in Geneva said that the patriarchate is "no threat" but is instead an asset to Turkey. The demonstrations were part of increasing pressure against the presence of the patriarchate, which holds spiritual responsibility for 250 million Orthodox Christians around the world. Patriarch Bartholomeos I said that Turkish officials expressed "indifference" to repeated attacks on Orthodox church properties. Georges Tssetsis, the patriarch's representative at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, contended that some Turkish intellectuals see that the

patriarchate can have "a positive contribution to make in the constructive relationship between Turkey and the rest of the world." He said that "it is unfortunate that religious institutions like the patriarchate become pawns in the political scene of two neighboring states," Greece and Turkey. He said that recent claims by some Turks that the patriarchate was trying to establish an "Orthodox Vatican" in Istanbul were absurd. "The Ecumenical Patriarch is not the universal bishop of the Orthodox Church like his brother in Rome," Tsatsis said, but "first among equals" of Orthodox bishops who serves as a link between local Orthodox churches and "expresses their unity." He pointed out that Bartholomeos was of ethnic Greek origin but was born in Turkey, is a citizen and even served as an officer in the Turkish army. Observers pointed to growing fears that Turkey is facing pressure to become an Islamic state.

### **Churches urge critical solidarity with South Africa**

(ENS) The closing statement from a recent conference sponsored by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) urged the church to adopt a position of "critical solidarity" with the Government of National Unity in the reconstruction and development of South Africa. The statement declared that "critical solidarity should be neither servile nor hostile to the new government but should work to promote a just social order with special emphasis on empowering the poor and marginalized." The statement, which will be finalized by the SACC and then distributed widely, also celebrated the "charisma and vitality" of African spirituality and urges further development of a more inclusive "African theology." More than 100 delegates, including visitors from overseas and from other parts of Africa, attended the conference.

### **Task Force studies Episcopal election process**

(ENS) The Episcopal Election Leadership Project (EELP) met recently to review material gathered during diocesan visits and to plan a conference at which EELP findings and recommendations may be shared with the church nationwide. EELP is tracking dioceses that have elected bishops through the first five years of their episcopates to learn ways to enrich and simplify the election process, and to discover ways of gaining the health and wholeness of bishops and dioceses during the process and through the time of transition. Over the past year, the nine-person lay and clergy task force met with bishops and focus groups in eight dioceses where a diocesan bishop had been elected in the past five years. Two person EELP teams visited Northern California, Iowa, Fond du Lac, Vermont, Easton, Dallas and New Jersey. EELP is a joint venture between the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations and the Office of Pastoral Development.



## **Romanian church enjoys wide approval**

(ENI) Romania's Orthodox church has grown massively in its influence and membership since the end of communism five years ago and is now a highly respected institution, according to a recent survey. The survey, sponsored by Bucharest's urban and regional sociology center, found that 82 percent of Romanians described the church's activity as "good or very good," compared with just seven percent who considered it "not very satisfactory." The army, with an approval rating of 91 percent, was the only Romanian institution with a higher rating than the church. "The church has always had a strong presence in national life," said a spokesman for the Orthodox Patriarchate. "Under communist rule, although priests were not allowed to preach outside their churches, they visited people at home and guided them in hard times." The Orthodox Church, which claims the spiritual loyalty of 87 percent of Romania's 22.8 million citizens, has begun building 382 new churches since 1989, according to a report last year.

## **Russian defense minister receives Christian baptism**

(ENI) Russian defense minister Pavel Grachev was recently baptized a Christian in a Georgian Orthodox church. Grachev chose the Georgian defense minister Vardiko Nadibaidze, a long-time personal friend, as his godfather. Grachev, who has been widely criticized for alleged Russian Army brutality during the war in Chechnya, was in the former Soviet republic for the signing of a co-operation agreement which gives Russia use of Georgian military bases for 20 years. The Rev. Ilia Vazheishvilli, a spokesman for the Tbilisi Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church, said that the baptism had taken place "quite unexpectedly." He declined comment on the background of Grachev's decision to join the Georgian church, saying that it was his "personal choice" and noting that "our church has had some success in converting communists, but not only--it has also made great progress in converting the population as a whole."

## **NCC recovers majority of \$8 million investment**

(ENS) The National Council of Churches (NCC) recently announced that it had recovered \$5 million of the \$8 million it invested in fraudulent securities issued in the name of the Prague-based Banka Bohemia. The NCC has filed suit in federal court in Boston against several parties to recover the remaining funds. "We expect to fully recover all the funds that were lost, plus damages," said the NCC's attorney, Richard F. Lawler of Whitman, Breed, Abbott and Morgan. "We are very grateful that the money has come back to us," said the Rev. Joan Campbell, NCC general secretary. "While funds on

hand mean there would have been no gap for several years, the recovery of the funds secures our ability to serve our retired employees who depend on us for their health care." The investments were in "prime bank guarantees," a category of financial instrument Lawler said did not really exist. Although \$1.2 billion of these instruments was reportedly printed in the name of the Banka Bohemia, Lawler said he knew of nobody except the NCC who had bought any.

### **Pope: Look at divisions, but remember shared faith**

(LWI) Speaking at a recent meeting with Catholic and Lutheran scholars, Pope John Paul II said that while Christians cannot ignore important issues dividing them, they should not emphasize those issues to the extent that they forget the faith they share. He said that 30 years of dialogue between the two churches has shown "that what we have in common is much more than what divides us." But as Catholics and Lutherans work toward unity, he said, that reality is reflected only with difficulty, as seen in "deeply rooted habits of emphasizing points--important as they are--which continue to stand in the way of full, visible unity. When we look at what has already been achieved, we have every reason to face the future with confidence grounded in faith."

### **Populations of world religions reported**

(LWI) Researcher David Barrett recently estimated that the number of Christians worldwide will total close to 1.94 billion, 33.7 percent of the world's population, by mid-1995. The number of Roman Catholics is estimated at over 1 billion, while the number of Protestants totals 354.7 million. Muslims are also estimated at over 1 billion. The number of unevangelized people dropped to about 1.14 billion--just under 20 percent of the world total. The figures are from Barrett's annual statistical table which was published in the January issue of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. The data in Barrett's table reflects totals gathered from about 250 nations.

### **CPSA bishops consider possibility of women as bishops**

(ENS) A resolution agreed upon at the recent synod of bishops of the Church in the Province of South Africa (CPSA) said the possibility of a woman being elected bishop "is a logical consequence of the decision to provide for the ordination of women to the priesthood." The resolution noted, however, that the church's last provincial synod had agreed that the issues of ordaining women as priests and as bishops should be separated. It said the issue needed to be resolved quickly and referred it to the CPSA's forthcoming



provincial synod in September, 1995. The bishops urged the province to "honor and sustain the spirit of mutual respect and sensitivity which has characterized its handling of this matter thus far."

### **500 Dutch Christians take vow against curse of racism**

(ENI) About 500 Christians, of all races and from many Dutch Protestant churches, recently took a "vow against racism" during a multi-cultural church service in Utrecht. The vow was one of several events in which Dutch churches have participated that led up to the international day against racism held on March 21. Karel Blei, secretary-general of the Netherlands Reformed Church, the largest Protestant church in the country, told the congregation that "racism leads to oppression, exploitation and destruction. It is incompatible with the faith in Jesus Christ, the Messiah." He declared that "we will tirelessly look at the conscience of churches, and of local and national authorities in this matter, and we pledge to God and to each other to be allies in the struggle against racism." The vow was part of an inter-church campaign to draw attention to increasing racist tendencies in Dutch society.

### **UBS reports 608 million bibles are not enough**

(ENI) Despite a recent report showing that 608,664,925 Bibles and parts of the Bible were distributed around the world last year by organizations linked to the United Bible Societies (UBS), the group's general secretary John Erikson warned that there was a "growing gap" between those who were receiving copies of the Bible and those who were not. He said that the world's growing population meant that the impressive publishing figures just released by UBS were not a reason to feel complacent. Describing the goals of UBS, Erikson said, "In a world of five billion people, it is our mandate as Bible societies to reach every person with the word of God."

### **AACC urges world's religious leaders to pray for Burundi**

(ENI) As thousands of Hutus flee the increasing threat of violence and death in Burundi for refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania, the All Africa Council of Churches (AACC) recently issued strong pleas to religious leaders in Africa and around the world to pray for peace--exercising their moral authority to stop the carnage and to address the pervading atmosphere of fear. The Rev. Jose Chipenda, general secretary of the AACC, called on religious people of all faiths to pray and work unceasingly to prevent Burundi from sinking into a genocide like the one that resulted in the death of a million people in neighboring Rwanda one year ago. "This is not the time to blame the

United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, or political parties. It is a time for all who believe in the sanctity of life to cry out for peace," Chipenda said. "In the name of God, in the name of humanity and in the name of Africans, here and in the diaspora, let killing and fear be replaced by negotiation and reconstruction. Let those persons--whether local or international--in the position to mediate between the decision makers of the conflicting parties continue and intensify their work."

### **Vatican plan to name new saint angers Czech Protestants**

(ENI) Czech Protestant leaders recently declared that relations with the Roman Catholic Church could face severe damage if Pope John Paul II goes ahead with plans to declare a 17th-century Roman Catholic priest as a saint during a papal visit to the Czech Republic in May. The canonization of Jan Sarkander, who was beatified (given the title "blessed") by Pope Pius IX in 1859, is expected to be the high point of the Pope's two-day visit to Prague and to the Czech town of Olomouc. "This figure was a precursor of forced re-Catholicization of Czech Protestants, who stood against believers in other faiths without sensitivity or Christian love," according to Bishop Pavel Smetana, chairman of the Czech Ecumenical Council. "If the canonization takes place, the leaders of the [Protestant] churches will find themselves under pressure to stop the currently positive development of ecumenism." Sarkander (1576-1620) spent most of his life as a Roman Catholic priest in Moravia. At the start of the Thirty Years War, the region's Lutheran occupiers accused him of having acted as a guide to Aleksander Lisowski's Roman Catholic Polish calvary. Sarkander died under torture in Olomouc prison.

### **People**

**Robert Addison**, who served as treasurer of the board of trustees of the Church Pension Fund from 1981 to 1986, and as chairman of the board until 1991, died of cancer on March 20. He was 76. He represented the Diocese of Western Michigan at 11 consecutive General Conventions. "He was clearly one of the elders of this diocese, a man who was committed to serving his church and his community," the Bishop Edward L. Lee, Jr. of Western Michigan noted in his homily. "His legacy will live on in the church for many decades."





## *news features*

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95065

### **Episcopal church delegation finds discouraging prospects for Middle East peace**

**by James H. Thrall**

(ENS) Druse villager Dr. Tha'er Kenge swept his arm across the snowy valley on the Golan Heights, nestled at the base of Mount Hermon near the cease-fire line with Syria. He pointed out the Jewish kibbutz below with its pond of precious water, its apple orchards.

"This was my land," he said.

A few hours later and some miles to the south, Marla Van Meter, resident of the Jewish settlement of Afik and a representative for Golan's 14,000 Jewish settlers, proudly laid out the accomplishments of the Israelis who pioneered on the high plateau following its capture from Syria in the Six Day War of 1967. Since she immigrated from the United States in 1983, "I've put roots down in more ways than one," she said. "It's not only a place to live, it's people who have made their living out of the land."

Such competing claims for land, for water and for truth clashed throughout a two-week fact-finding tour in March to Israel, Jordan and the Occupied Territories of Gaza and the West Bank by delegates of the Episcopal Peace and Justice Network. In a grueling schedule of nearly 40 meetings with religious leaders, politicians, peace activists, students and Druse, Palestinian and Jewish residents of the Occupied Territories and Golan Heights, the network's steering committee was steeped in the issues that threaten to derail the region's progress toward peace.

#### **Discouraging words**

Even the few voices that spoke hopefully of the prospects for real peace admitted that failure was just as likely. "It's a very difficult process, and likely

to be a bloody process and likely to be an extremely frustrating process," said Rabbi David Rosen of the World Conference on Religion and Peace. He warned against unrealistic expectations. "It's a manic-depressive situation," he said. "The higher up you are, the lower you go."

Formed five years ago to coordinate peace and justice efforts in the Episcopal Church, the network initiated the trip to take a pulse of the current critical stage in the struggle toward peace. Its focus follows the lead of General Convention resolutions and other church statements calling for peace through an autonomous homeland for Palestinians, and echoes the personal concern about the region of Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning and his wife, Patti.

Despite the steps toward peace made with the accord signed in 1993 in Oslo, Norway, by Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the delegation found a discouraging pattern of frustrated hopes and escalating violence.

"In terms of social conditions, the situation is getting worse after the peace accord," as negotiations to implement the agreement seem mired in delays, and the Israeli Defense Force cracks down on residents of the Occupied Territories with severe restrictions on travel in the name of security, observed the Rev. Hanna Mansour, a deacon who serves St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in the West Bank town of Zebabde.

Largely cut off from employment and services in Israel and especially Jerusalem, the Palestinian population suffers both economic and psychological hardship in an unequal struggle for rights, observed the Rev. Brian Grieves, the Episcopal Church's peace and justice officer. Ann Thompson of Cary, North Carolina, a member of the delegation, who visited the area in 1989 at the height of the *intifada* or grassroots Palestinian revolt, said "the hardest thing was to go back and see that things were worse." Earlier she saw "a lot of hope and a possibility of resolution," but now her strongest impression was one of "despair, frustration."

### **Settlements create a reality of possession**

Settlements--the stones, mortar and families that are solidifying Israeli claims on the Occupied Territories and East Jerusalem, even during the negotiations that could turn the areas into a Palestinian homeland--continue to spread rapidly, the delegates found. Since 1967, the Israeli population of the Occupied Territories and East Jerusalem has grown from essentially zero to 300,000 people in more than 114 settlements.

In the weeks before the delegation's trip, Browning joined seven other Christian leaders in calling specifically for an end to the settlements in East

Jerusalem, criticizing the creation of "facts on the ground" that threaten Palestinian claims on the city. The statement, which has been sharply attacked by several Jewish organizations, calls for an end to the shift in land ownership by "annexation, expropriation, and private purchases, often coercive or of questionable legality."

The Zionism that feeds the growth of settlements "should be declared a heresy," said attorney Lynda Brayer of the Society of St. Ives, a legal resource center for human rights in Jerusalem, who represents Palestinians whose property has been confiscated and homes destroyed in the settlement construction. A former Jew who converted to Catholicism, she said she now recognizes a certain blindness about the effects of Zionism. "People do not understand, in the biblical sense of 'to know,' what they are doing," she said.

### **Building a city**

Like Van Meter in the Golan Heights, settler Bob Lang, another American, proudly presented the community he has helped build. On a bus tour of Efrat in the West Bank, he showed off what resembled an American suburb of laid-out roads and neat stone houses with red-tiled roofs. Since the first family settled 12 years ago, he said, the population has grown to 1,000 families or 6,000 people. "Our goal is to be 15,000 people, which will make us a city," he said.

He challenged the term "Occupied Territories" since it suggests that "Israel is here illegally." He asserted, "My claim to be here and my claim to be sovereign here is equal to anyone's."

While the value of the Golan as a bastion of military defense for Israel may seem less critical in an era of long-range missiles, Van Meter said it is still important for defense and even more precious as a major source for Israel's water, with tributaries that flow from the heights into the Sea of Galilee. And after 28 years and three generations of Israelis, the settlers who see themselves as defining Israel's borders by Syria "are reality," she said. "We are a fact that must be taken into consideration."

But standing in the house built by his grandfather, a leader in the struggle against French domination in the 1920s, Kenge recalled the "more than 100,000 people in more than 100 villages" who lived in the Golan before 1967. Most of the villages, he said, were destroyed by the Israelis who left eery ghost towns of bombed out homes. Now only 16,000 Druse still live in the area.

He spoke bitterly of confiscated land, of water fees imposed on even the rainwater the Druse collect, and expressed the hope that his village would some day again be a part of Syria. He showed the group the cease-fire line



near his house where separated family members call to each other, hold funerals and sometimes weddings.

The future for the Druse depends on any peace treaty between Israel and Syria, rather than the creation of a Palestinian state, but "we think we have the same future," Kenge said. "If the Palestinian problem will not be solved, our problem will not be solved."

### **Scenes of squalor in refugee camps**

In stark contrast to the settlements, refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip presented pictures of densely packed poverty. With the outbreak of the 1948 war that led to the creation of Israel, more than 700,000 Palestinians "fled for their lives or were pressured to leave," said the Rev. Robert Assaly, an Anglican priest serving in Jerusalem. More were displaced in the subsequent conflicts.

The refugee camps established in the Occupied Territories and Jordan nearly 50 years ago, he said, have long since become permanent communities attempting to function with what was intended to be temporary infrastructures. On their tours of several camps, the delegates stepped over open sewers and around piles of garbage. Moving from the camps to the settlements in Gaza "you get the feeling you are moving between two planets," Assaly said. "You're talking about heaven and hell juxtaposed."

The camps were the center of some of the fiercest fighting during the *intifada*, and their residents had some of the harshest stories to tell. In their visits to homes in the Jalazon Refugee Camp in the West Bank, the delegates saw rooms permanently sealed by the Israeli Defense Force as collective punishment to the family of an imprisoned *intifada* fighter, saw pictures of sons killed and heard stories of sons disabled.

Of the nearly one million residents of Gaza, 650,000 are considered refugees, with about half living in the crowded refugee camps. At Beach Camp in Gaza, where 50,000 people are squeezed into one square mile, Mahmoud Okshiyya of the Near East Council of Churches translated for a woman who showed a bare concrete room that was home to 14 people. Asked what the delegates could do to help when they returned to their congregations, she answered, "What you have seen, tell them."

### **Restrictions chafe during the wait for peace**

A bad situation became worse during a year of increased pressure from Israeli forces, the delegates were told. With the signing of the Oslo accord the *intifada* officially ended, to be replaced with a less frequent, but more dangerous type of violence. As suicide bombs took the place of stone-

throwing, movement for Palestinians between the Occupied Territories and Israel has dropped precipitously under heightened restrictions of martial law.

The restrictions on travel permits have caused huge unemployment in the West Bank, especially as the tightest restrictions are around East Jerusalem, a center for West Bank employment and activity. Palestinians found in the city without proper permits face fines and jail.

"There is free access to Jerusalem to all the people of the world, but not to us," said His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem and a Palestinian. "All of our daily life is disorganized because of this permit system."

With the closures, Gaza in particular is described as "a prison where the guards have moved to the perimeter," noted Assaly. Unemployment there now hovers between 60 and 65 percent.

Closures, said Yasser Arafat, who met with the delegation at his office in Gaza City, have sealed the borders of Gaza for 170 days in the past 10 months, with an estimated cost to Gaza residents and businesses of \$4 million a day. Trucks sit idle at checkpoints, unable to deliver products--including a main Gaza export of fresh produce--to market, he said. "This closure is a collective punishment for my people," he said. "They are not punishing these fanatic groups. They are punishing their allies. We are allies now."

A woefully inadequate medical system of only 912 beds to serve nearly a million people is being further taxed by the restrictions, said Suhaila Tarazi, director of Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza run by the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.

"One week ago, a woman, 25 years old, passed away because we were unable to get a permit to transfer her to a hospital in Israel," she said.

"Unless they get justice, there's going to be more bloodshed," said delegate Richard Kerner of Dallas, Texas. "Parents unable to feed their children are going to resort to violence." "It's a matchbox about to explode," agreed Lou Schoen of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

### **Slow movement on accord increases pressure**

The restrictions are especially galling because there is little evidence of positive movement in the peace negotiations, said Sabbah. As the delays continue, "many of the Palestinians are not supporting the peace process, and some are going to violence," he said. "Why Israelis are not giving more peace to the Palestinians, this is what I can't understand. It is not just for the peace of Palestine, it is for their own good."

"We are being very flexible, very patient, we are being quite nice," said Bishop Elia Houry, retired suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem,

who proudly sports his nickname of "the terrorist bishop" as a member of the executive council of the PLO. Stalling negotiations in response to terrorist attacks makes matter worse, he complained. "We can assure them that we will do our best to keep things in order," he said, but "we can not guarantee we can kill terrorism. We don't have the means. When the Israelis were in Gaza, were they able to stop terrorism?"

His words were echoed by Arafat. He tells those who are most frustrated that "we have no other alternatives" beside the peace accord. "Sooner or later we will achieve the peace," he said. He urges patience, while admitting that "patience has limits."

His own patience is drawing thin, he confessed, especially around the issue of elections for a Palestinian council to govern the emerging autonomy of the Palestinian people. "The election was supposed to be last July," he said. "We are in need of this election. I am in need of a mandate from my people. If not me, someone instead of me."

### **"Security is not a four-letter word"**

But members of both the conservative Likud and more moderate Labor parties in the Knesset argued for caution.

While calling the peace process "the light at the end of the tunnel," Uri Orr of Labor, chair of the Knesset's foreign affairs committee, reminded the delegation, "We don't have a peace treaty with the Palestinians. We have a Declaration of Principles. It's a beginning, a very important agreement, but we need a thousand details to fill in the substance." In the interim, he said, "the people in Israel are very sensitive about security."

He answered Arafat's familiar complaint that his job is made more difficult, if not impossible, by delays in paying promised donations from foreign countries, including the United States. "They still didn't build the administration, the tools to take the money from the donors," Orr said. "We'd like to see all this money accountable to create jobs, to build schools."

"Security is not a four-letter word," said Dan Meridor of Likud. "It's a very important part of our society. We have to be strong. I would not advocate strength at the expense of justice, but justice without strength is not enough." He defended Israel's human rights record throughout the struggle with the Palestinians, noting that while considering itself at war, the country still has put army personnel on trial in cases where they "have exceeded the lines or the orders they were given."

### **A pledge to help**

The delegation returned committed to sharing what they experienced,



and clinging to the glimmers of hope found in an otherwise bleak picture. "We have a ministry of facts, of telling everyone when we go home what we've seen and heard," said Schoen.

And while really hearing the discouragement is "an important piece of sharing the pain," as Margaret Lehrecke of Tappan, New York noted, the delegates also took some solace in the examples of hopefulness they did see: the ministries to ease the suffering, and the quiet efforts to keep dialogue open.

A sense of the region's trauma must be brought home to the church in the United States, the country that both supplies the greatest financial aid to Israel's defense force and has taken on the prime responsibility for brokering the peace process, said Thompson. "I think we're all diminished by what's going on here," agreed the Rev. Bill Exner of Goffstown, New Hampshire. If there is to be peace, it has to be an equal peace, a peace with real justice, he said. "It's a hollow victory that's won at the expense of others," he said.

**--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.**

95066

## **Episcopal peace and justice delegation protests Israel's detention of U.S. citizen in West Bank**

**by James H. Thrall**

(ENS) Bumping unexpectedly into the harsh system of military law used by the Israeli Defense Force to crack down on terrorism in the Occupied Territories, members of the Peace and Justice Network of the Episcopal Church on a fact-finding tour of the Middle East found themselves protesting the arrest and detention without charge of an American citizen living in the West Bank.

While the delegation had been told of frequent detentions of young

Palestinian men, they got a first-hand experience when they attempted to visit 20-year-old Butrus "Peter" Saleh, born in Salem, Massachusetts, at Fa'ra Prison near Nablus. They were refused entry to the prison, and learned later from the American Consul that no American representative had been allowed to see Saleh for the first two weeks of his detention. Saleh was arrested from his residence in the West Bank, March 13. Only after repeated efforts was a representative of the American Consul finally allowed to visit Saleh on March 29. She reported that Saleh appeared to be in good health, but said he had been forced to confess to a charge of throwing stones at soldiers, which he denied.

An attorney they met at the prison said he often waited hours or days to see prisoners he represented, and reported that many were tortured into confessing crimes they did not commit.

In an open letter to the United States government (see text following), members of the network's Episcopal delegation stated that they were "deeply angered at the apparent impotence" of the government to investigate the detention of Saleh.

"We are not only deeply concerned about the human rights posture of the State of Israel, but also with the incapacity of the United States Government, the major foreign sponsor of the Israeli Defense Force, to gain immediate information about American citizens imprisoned by Israeli authorities," the delegation said. "Mr. Saleh's situation is apparently symbolic of a systemic reality in the Occupied Territories, in which young men who appear to be Palestinian are seized without explanation and often without cause."

They also expressed their shock at learning from the consul that Saleh was only one of four Americans being held. "Can Americans abroad no longer count on their government to protect them from abuse by another government?" the delegation asked. "Or is it that Israel is somehow a special case?"

Until the delegation raised the issue, no information was provided the consul about Saleh's location, the reason for his arrest or his physical condition. Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning informed U.S. government leaders of the case during a visit to Washington D.C., and both the consul office and the delegation pledged to continue to monitor Saleh's detention.

**--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.**

95067

## **Palestinian crisis threatens continuing Christian presence in Holy Land**

**by James H. Thrall**

(ENS) In the complicated mix of destinies to be shaped by the struggle between Palestinians and Israelis, one real casualty could be the future for Christian Palestinians, representatives of the Episcopal Church's Peace and Justice Network learned during a fact-finding tour of the Middle East.

"We as Christians in this part of the world are being sandwiched between extremist Muslims and extremist Israelis," said Bishop Elia Khoury, retired suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem and a member of the executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The result is a trend toward emigration that threatens the continued presence of Christians in the Holy Land, he said.

As conditions for Palestinians in general suffer under restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities concerned about security, the already small number of Christians willing to stay dwindles.

"Who are the people who are leaving? They are the educated, ambitious people who can be leaders, leaving the community with no leadership," said Fuad Farah, general secretary of the YMCA in Nazareth. "They feel they are being cut off from everything. They have nothing to hang on to."

While there were 25,000 Christians living in Jerusalem before the Six Day War in 1967, "now there are hardly 8,000," said Khoury. "In three or four years' time, these Christians may not remain. When you come to the Holy Land, you will find stones, churches, shrines, without worshippers," he said.

"People ask me when I became a Christian," said Laila Diab, general secretary of the YWCA in Jordan, a former refugee whose family fled from Palestine in 1948. "My answer is that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem and not in New York City. We have been here from the beginning."

"Many Christians in the west have more to do with the Israelis than with the Christians of the Holy Land," said Canon Riah Abu El-Assal of Christ Church, Nazareth, noting that conservative Christian denominations in particular tend to identify with and support Zionism. Calling Palestinian Christians "the forgotten faithful," he said they are now only 1.5 percent of the total population.

Though small in number, they can play a vital role in moderating a



struggle that tends to become polarized between Muslims and Jews, he said. "We can become the bridge," Abu El-Assal said. "We can help people understand the need for reconciliation."

In part because of their dwindling numbers, Christians of different denominations tend to stick together in grassroots ecumenism, noted the Rev. Hanna Mansour, a deacon who serves St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in the West Bank town of Zebabde. "We've started a new movement here, an ecumenical movement because ecumenism here is a necessity," he said. As one example, Mansour said, his congregation will be celebrating Easter with the local Greek Orthodox congregation according to the Orthodox calendar, and the two congregations will, in turn, celebrate Christmas together on December 25.

"To work together, to be together, to pray together, to stay together, to think together, to learn together, and to build a certain unity between the churches, is a matter of life and death," agreed a Catholic colleague, the Rev. Manuel Emasslan.

**--James H. Thrall is deputy director of news and information for the Episcopal Church.**

95068

## **In rector's death, as in his life, a church is united**

**by Steve Giegerich**

(ENS) On the first Sunday of February, Bishop Joe Doss of the Diocese of New Jersey told the congregation of Christ Church in Shrewsbury that their beloved rector was dying of AIDS. The priest was gay and had been living with his lover--also an Episcopal priest--in the church rectory since 1988, Doss said.

To most of Christ Church, Doss' message was not a revelation. "It might have been news to some parishioners, but not many," said congregant Mike Badal.

A veil lifted as Doss spoke. Finally, what so many had known about

the Rev. James LaSage for seven years was out in the open. Fraught with traumatic social and spiritual implications, the disclosure might well have put the parishioners' faith to the test. Instead, Christ Church turned it into an opportunity to put that faith into practice.

"Even though it's a terrible place to be right now, I think we all realize we may never get a chance like this again to do what God would have us do and live the Gospel," said parishioner Jamie Gwinnett of Colts Neck Township.

### **'God answered my prayer'**

On February 16, eleven days after Doss' visit to Christ Church, "Father Jim" died in the rectory. That morning, LaSage's companion, the Rev. James C. McReynolds, had interrupted his bedside vigil just long enough to feed the couple's two Labrador retrievers.

McReynolds put the dogs in the back yard and headed back to LaSage's room: "As I started up the steps, it almost felt as if an angel was pulling me. I walked in the room just as his color was changing. All along I had prayed that God would let him die in my arms. God answered my prayer."

LaSage and McReynolds moved in 1988 to the Sycamore Avenue rectory from the town house they'd shared in Greenwich Village. LaSage had been curate at the Church of the Ascension in Manhattan and McReynolds was pastoral associate at Trinity Church Wall Street.

In Shrewsbury, McReynolds devoted his full attention to the Teleios Foundation, an organization assisting the residents of St. Petersburg, Russia, but he had no official role within Christ Church.

LaSage, in the meantime, assumed the leadership of a historic parish. Founded in 1702, Christ Church's congregation still meets in a structure erected in 1769.

LaSage was the 26th applicant interviewed by the church's search committee. Youth--he was 31 at the time--and enthusiasm got him the job. The committee believed he would be a positive influence on the young families in the congregation.

### **A certain aura**

LaSage energized Christ Church. He brought the two labs to the church study with him every day. "The dogs were a part of his pastoral counseling," said McReynolds. "They helped calm people down when they came to his office."

With LaSage at the helm, Christ Church became more than a place to congregate every Sunday. There were church dinners, Thursday night

Communion services and study groups that brought the Bible into modern times.

Membership at Christ Church grew steadily. Don and Jamie Gwinnell discovered LaSage while "church shopping" before they married. Raised a Roman Catholic, Jamie didn't know what to expect from a Protestant congregation. "As soon as I saw him and I heard him I just knew this was my church. He just had a certain aura," she said. LaSage and McReynolds officiated at the Gwinnells' wedding. Later the two couples became best friends.

In the sanctuary, LaSage was all business. A "cradle Episcopalian"--born into the religion--he had an instinctive understanding of church rites. "Everything about the service just came naturally to him," McReynolds said.

### **A liturgical artist**

Nothing came more naturally than the Episcopalian liturgy. LaSage was a liturgical artist, so adept at assembling a service that last year Doss called upon LaSage--chair of the diocese's liturgy commission--to arrange his consecration as bishop.

"A service had to have a certain flow to it and, with Jim, you didn't let anything interrupt that flow," McReynolds said. "To him the sanctuary was a very blessed place," said Bob Thomas, a Christ Church member.

The line LaSage drew between the church offices and the sanctuary was not his only delineation. For there was also a distinct line drawn around his personal life.

Before coming to Shrewsbury, LaSage and McReynolds decided to neither disclose nor hide their relationship. "We believed it would distract from what Jim wanted to do as a priest. If we had made it an issue then, it would have had a divisive impact on his purpose for coming here, which was to teach the love of God to the people," McReynolds said.

"I think everybody knew right away," said church treasurer Charles Monet. "But it never really mattered to anyone."

Longtime church member Shirley Badal said the rector's sexual orientation was a hot topic at the Altar Guild shortly after LaSage and McReynolds arrived, and "a few people walked away and never came back to the church." But, Badal added, once the initial flurry of gossip and speculation subsided, no one gave it a second thought.

### **Openness, truth and clarity**

In hindsight, some of the parishioners wonder if the church might have been better served had LaSage and McReynolds been more forthcoming. Doss,



in his February 5 remarks to the congregation, apologized for preaching tolerance from the diocesan pulpit while promoting an atmosphere that discouraged LaSage and McReynolds from openly discussing their relationship, even though the Episcopal church does not prohibit the ordination of gay men and women.

"The reality is that a significant portion of our society is gay, and from that we know that a significant proportion of our church--all of them faithful Christians--are gay. Openness, truth and clarity are virtues that we have to realize in our relationships with one another. Openness is better for everyone," Doss said in a telephone interview last week.

Ultimately, LaSage's illness pushed the issue out of the closet. When he was diagnosed with HIV--"On October 4, 1991, unquestionably the worst day of our lives. We wept, we prayed, we started to learn how to live our lives one day at a time," said McReynolds--the companions again concluded it was best the congregation at large not know. A few, like the Gwinnells, were told. The rest of the church was not.

"I don't think he said anything because his first concern was the people of this parish," said Jamie Gwinnell. "It's a terrible disease and people are ostracized. I think maybe he was afraid people would run, and he wouldn't do that to the church."

### **A flood of love and compassion**

Still, many parishioners--who wanted to be there for LaSage as he had been there so often for them--wished they'd been informed. Said Charles Monet: "As close as he was to us he could have been honest with us so, as he was going through all this, we could have reached out to pray for him."

In the last year LaSage grew progressively weaker. And as hospital stays for kidney failure and complications kept him increasingly from the pulpit, the cause of his maladies became increasingly difficult to conceal.

At LaSage's final service, on New Year's Day, the frail rector stood bewildered and paralyzed with uncertainty before the altar. McReynolds quickly stepped up, whispered something gently in LaSage's ear and helped him. Badal watched the entire episode and concluded something was desperately wrong.

Within two weeks, Doss summoned an emergency meeting of the church vestry and the decision was made to officially inform the congregation.

The aftermath of the bishop's appearance at Christ Church proved McReynolds and LaSage had made the right decision by de-emphasizing their relationship and LaSage's illness. For Doss' announcement triggered not a debate about homosexuality and its relationship to AIDS, but a flood of love,

understanding and compassion.

The AIDS that visited Christ Church became a disease bereft of the usual stigma.

"Nobody abandoned him," said Mike Badal.

To the steady stream of parishioners visiting the hospital bed in the rectory, McReynolds was a constant presence. He never left LaSage's side.

Noel Murgio, junior warden of the parish vestry, was one of four nurses in the parish to care for LaSage in his final days. "I've witnessed a lot of families in that situation (watching and waiting as a loved one dies). But Father McReynolds was the most nurturing person I have ever seen. It was incredible, that love," Murgio said.

### **A perfect farewell**

As difficult as the last days were, McReynolds said he is mostly at peace. "When I can let myself feel where Jim is now, I am happy and filled with joy," he said.

Bishop Doss and McReynolds said the Mass and delivered the homily at LaSage's funeral on February, 18. The rector's favorite parishioners read the Scriptures.

For the mourners who packed Christ Church, there was joy along with sorrow. Everyone agreed the service--meticulously planned by a liturgical genius--was the perfect farewell for a cradle Episcopalian.

*--reprinted with permission from the February 26 edition of the Asbury Park Sunday Press.*

95069

## **After a year, 1,387 women priests in England release 'energy into the ministry'**

**By Cedric Pulford**

(END)--Just over a year after the ordination of the first women priests in the Church of England "it seems all too normal now--one wonders what the fuss was about," according to Patience Purchas, one of the 1,387 women

ordained in the past year.

On March 12 last year, 32 women were ordained as priests at Bristol Cathedral. They and the hundreds who soon followed are now serving in many roles including parish incumbent, team rector, canon, rural dean and chaplain, already representing about one-tenth of Anglican priests in England.

Purchas speaks of female clergy providing "a great release of gifts and energy into the ministry."

But unemployment is a problem, with up to 500 women lacking paid religious work.

From all indications, the momentum for the ordination of women continues. In 1993-94 (the latest year for which figures are available) women represent 30 percent of those who are preparing for the priesthood or 125 women as compared with 548 men in theological colleges. In non-residential courses there were 215 women and 240 men.

### **Distinctive gifts**

The Bishop of Hereford, John Oliver, said recently of women priests, "I believe that women in ministry are bringing their distinctive gifts to bear--perhaps above all a willingness to share leadership and to surrender power.

"The acceptance of their ministry has been so warm and so rapid that women priests feel a totally normal part of life, and their gifts and skills are enormously enriching," he said.

The argument over women priests that traumatized the Church of England for a decade may have faded, but not all the problems have gone away. Purchas speaks of the "gut-lag of people whose heads say they should accept women priests but whose feelings say otherwise."

Christina Rees of Ministry of Women (formerly the Movement for the Ordination of Women) is convinced that "guerrilla opposition continues." For example, on many issues, Catholic traditionalists and evangelical fundamentalists are in different camps, but they have made an unusual alliance against women's ordination. And those who continue their opposition face the choice of leaving the Church of England to join the Roman Catholic Church or go "into the wilderness."

A spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church in England said recently that about 200 Church of England priests have sought to join the Roman Catholic Church.

It will be some time before any find themselves in Roman Catholic parishes, however. Training in Roman Catholic traditions and teachings will last up to two years. Moreover, after initial hesitation, the Vatican has decided that married clergy leaving the Church of England will not be able to



administer parishes.

Under the leadership of Cardinal Basil Hume, the Roman Catholics have been careful to avoid triumphalism about these conversions. Neither have Anglicans made capital over clergymen who switched to Roman Catholicism and then returned.

### **The future is bright**

For women like Rees and Purchas, troubles belong largely to the past and the future looks bright.

Rees sees unemployment among women priests as a regrettable "blip" that will be resolved. "Large batches of clergymen were ordained after the Second World War," she told ENI. "These people will be retiring in the next few years, so there will be many vacancies."

Purchas, whose husband Tom is rector of Wheathampstead and rural dean, believes ordained couples have a distinctive contribution to make to the church. In the Diocese of St. Albans, she is one of the dozen or so women priests. She and her husband "don't do a double act," however. She said that some couples do make it work well, often dividing the parish into their own areas of interest.

As a member of the diocesan team, Purchas works away from Wheathampstead, and she and her husband have separate telephone lines into the rectory. Purchas is well-placed to avoid another fate that seems to befall women priests. As one woman priest lamented recently, "Taking holy orders hasn't made that much difference. The parishioners still see me as the vicar's wife."

--Cedric Pulford is a reporter for *Ecumenical News International*.

95070

## **A Pastoral Letter**

**From the Meeting of the Primates of the Anglican Communion issued 16 March 1995, Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, England**

Grace to you and Peace.

We, the Primates and Moderators of the 36 Member Churches of the

Anglican Communion, have assembled in Windsor, England, March 10-17, 1995.

The theme of our meeting has been leadership as your servants in the light of the Gospel. Advances in the ministry of reconciliation continue to open new areas of Christian calling and sacrifice. Our being together has strengthened our vision in Christ and renewed our desire to improve our structures, leadership and communication.

In all our work we have been nourished by daily worship and guided study of the Scriptures. We have experienced anew the life-giving Word of God speaking to us of God's costly and gracious love in Jesus Christ. "We do not proclaim ourselves, we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake." (II Corinthians 4:5)

We have shared the vision of the Archbishop of Canterbury for the forthcoming Lambeth Conference 1998 and warmly welcome the plans that are being made.

Among the concerns we have addressed are the restructuring of the Church for mission in the face of secularism, including consideration of the Decade of Evangelism.

Our leadership in the Church is challenged by the denial of human rights, often leading to the displacement of people and the explosion of refugee populations, and by the persistence of poverty, racism, sexism, and tribalism in the midst of political and human strife. The importance of building inter-faith relationships is acknowledged and we abhor the growing fundamentalism in many parts of the world.

We give thanks for the moral and political miracle in South Africa which overcame the evil of apartheid. The prayers, the courage, and the suffering of many have encouraged people across the world. We also give thanks for the progress towards permanent peace in Northern Ireland--and for the ministries of faithful people responsible for the new life in that corner of the earth. At the same time we reiterate our plea that the peace process be expedited in the Middle East, urging that there be a fair sharing of the City of Jerusalem, sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians. We also pray for an end to the dispute in Bougainville Island and we support the churches there in their efforts to find a solution to this tragic conflict. We note with gratitude the heroic efforts of the National Council of Churches in Korea, including our own Anglican Church of Korea, towards the unification of the North and South over the past 50 years. We support these churches as they seek to celebrate this Jubilee spirit.

Despite these signs of hope, we deplore the world's continued massive expenditure on the personnel and weapons of war--and the continuing threat

of land mines to innocent human life.

We are distressed over the suffering in Rwanda, a dramatic symbol of the crucifixion which is central to our faith. The Meeting heard of the generous support provided by many sectors of the Anglican family.

We wish to express our continuing concern for the Church in Rwanda and to this end support the proposed visits by a delegation from the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa and also the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Secretary General.

We also heard of the pain of the Church in Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and the Sudan, and commend these situations to your continuing prayer and support.

There are large sections of humanity who suffer progressive impoverishment and oppression. Many countries are enslaved by debt. We deplore the fact that 20% of the world's people control 84% of the world's wealth, while 20% make do on a mere 1.4%. 40,000 people, mostly children, die every day of starvation and preventable disease. We challenge the rich to remember that wealth is a trust, not an entitlement--and that impoverishment perpetuated among the many must ultimately rebound in reprisals against the few.

Around the world serious questions relating to human sexuality are being faced by the Church. The traditional response to these questions is to affirm the moral precepts which have come down to us through the tradition of the Church. Nevertheless, we are conscious that within the Church itself there are those whose pattern of sexual expression is at variance with the received Christian moral tradition, but whose lives in other respects demonstrate the marks of genuine Christian character. The issues are deep and complex. They do not always admit of easy, instant answers. A careful process of reflecting on contemporary forms of behavior in the light of the scriptures and the Christian moral tradition is required. We have to recognize that there are different understandings at present among Christians of equal commitment and faith. We invite every part of the Church to face the questions about sexuality with honesty and integrity, avoiding unnecessary confrontation and polarization, in a spirit of faithful seeking to understand more clearly the will of God for our lives as Christians.

We thank God for the witness and support of young people in the Communion. We encourage their continuing challenge of our complacency and we pledge them our willingness to listen to their deepest concerns.

As leaders of the Communion we approach the end of the second millennium conscious of our Lord's admonition not to be afraid. Spiritual



hunger is growing all the time. The Christian mission has never been more needed.

We ask for your prayerful support as we return to our homes and work. We covenant with one another to be faithful in our ministries to the Church and to the world, upheld by the certainty that nothing shall separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus.

95071

## **Open Statement to the United States Government on the Incarceration of an American Citizen by Israel**

Leaders of the Episcopal Peace and Justice Network and other members of a delegation from the Episcopal Church, U.S.A., traveling in Jordan, Israel, and the Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem, are deeply angered at the apparent impotence of the United States Government to investigate the arrest and detention of an American citizen, Mr. Peter (Butrus) Saleh. We request a timely response from our government.

Mr. Saleh was seized by the Israeli Defense Force on Monday, March 13 at 11:30 pm from his residence in the West Bank. For more than two weeks, all attempts to visit him, including our own, were denied or ignored by Israeli military authorities.

The U.S. Consul in Jerusalem was made aware of his case immediately by members of Mr. Saleh's family, but not by the Israeli Defense Force. The consul said earlier this week that the Israeli Defense Force still had not responded with the reason for Mr. Saleh's arrest, his location and physical condition, nor had the consul been granted permission to visit Mr. Saleh, despite repeated efforts. Possibly as a result of the increased visibility of this case raised by this delegation, a representative of the consul finally was allowed to visit Mr. Saleh on March 29.

In our meeting with the U.S. Consul General's office in Jerusalem, we learned to our distress that cables sent to the State Department about his detention had been ignored to that date. Information about the case was also provided to the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, the State Department, the office of Vice President Al Gore prior to his recent visit to Israel and

Jericho, and the office of Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. We are unaware of any response from those offices.

Mr. Saleh's situation is apparently symbolic of a systemic reality in the Occupied Territories, in which young men who appear to be Palestinian are seized without explanation and often without cause. They are held for extended periods, and reportedly are sometimes tortured or threatened until they sign a confession. This reality has been extensively documented by the Israeli human rights organization, B'TSELEM, most recently in a report dated November, 1994.

On March 28, our delegation met with Knesset Member Uri Orr, a member of the Labor Government, to discuss the current peace process. In the course of our discussion, we informed him of Mr. Saleh's fate. He promised to secure information and advise us.

Whatever the results of that inquiry, we are not only deeply concerned with the human rights posture of the State of Israel but also with the incapacity of the United States Government, the major foreign sponsor of the Israeli Defense Force, to gain immediate information about American citizens imprisoned by Israeli authorities. To learn, as we did, that four such cases are now pending without public notice is still more shocking. Can Americans abroad no longer count on their government to protect them from abuse by another government? Or is it that Israel is somehow a special case?

We came to Israel and Palestine out of our concern for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and especially among Christians, Muslims and Jews here in the "Holy Land" and the "city of peace," Jerusalem. Now our concern extends not only to the increasingly sober realities on the ground here in this land but also to the capacity and will of our own government to promote human rights and justice for Americans abroad in Israel/Palestine, and, by extension, for all the people of the Holy Land.

We expect the American government to demand that, as an American, Mr. Saleh be given access to "due process." Given his current status and the well-documented, infamous procedures of Israeli military courts, this would include that he be released or charged and tried in an Israeli civil court. We anxiously await a response from our government.

<b>The Rev. William Exner</b>	<b>Ms. Ann Thompson</b>
<b>Mr. Lou Schoen</b>	<b>Mr. Richard Kerner</b>
<b>Ms. Madeleine Trichel</b>	<b>The Rev. Brian Grieves</b>
<b>Mr. Rigoberto Avila</b>	<b>Ms. Margaret Lehrecke</b>
<b>Mr. Paul M. Neuhauser</b>	<b>Mr. Robert Bell</b>





# reviews and resources

95072

## **Conference on civil rights and Christian mission announced**

(ENS) The Archives of the Episcopal Church and the National Episcopal Historians and Archivists recently announced that they will co-sponsor a conference entitled *The Episcopal Church: Civil Rights and Christian Mission*, to be held in Austin, Texas, June 21-24. Conference organizers said that "the civil rights movement had a profound and unresolved impact on the Episcopal Church and the direction of its mission. The conference reviews this dominant chapter in the church's history and reflects on continuing efforts toward transforming Christian mission." Guest speakers include Bishop Arthur Walmsley, the Rev. Gardiner Shattuck, Dr. John Booty, the Rev. John Morris, the Rev. Paul Washington, and Dr. D. Elwood Dunn. For more information, contact the Archives of the Episcopal Church at (800) 525-9329.

## **Radio-TV Foundation offers reduced costs, new strategies**

(ENS) The Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation (ERTV) has announced reduced costs for the four 30-second TV commercials that compose their Episcopal Advertising Project. According to the Rev. Canon Louis Schueddig, executive director of ERTV, "While everyone agreed that the commercials were creative, forceful and the highest quality ever used by our church, the scope of the 'package,' which included minimum media purchase expectations, put the program out of the reach of many interested dioceses." Based on their experience over the past two years however, ERTV is suggesting a new plan of action. "To maximize the effectiveness of your program, simply identify lay people from your parish or parishes who are advertising or marketing executives," Schueddig said. "By their gifts and talents, they can provide incredible leadership to your evangelism ministry using their expertise, experience and contacts to help get your commercials on the air." He went on to note that the campaign works best when local churches "are in complete control of the scope of their own program. Local lay experts can effectively and efficiently get the job done as long as they don't have to deal with the



costs and problems of producing high-quality commercials from scratch." The cost for use of one or two of the commercials is \$350/ad. The cost for use of any three of the four commercials is \$325/ad. For use of all four commercials the cost is \$300/ad. For more information, call ERTV at (404) 233-5419, fax (404) 233-3597. The Episcopal Ad Project is also available in Spanish. Bishop Leo Frade of Honduras is responsible for the Spanish translation of the ads, which he has been broadcasting on television stations in his diocese.

**Photos available in this issue of ENS are:**

1. Church leaders express alarm during visit to Washington (95056)
2. Anglican primates meet in England to discuss common issues (95057)
3. NCC Racial Justice Working Group supports Apaches in Arizona (95059)
4. Graham proclaims gospel around the globe (95061)
5. Peace and Justice Network visits Gaza vocational training ministry (95065)
6. Settler defends policy of building Jewish communities in occupied territories (95065)
7. Peace and Justice Network visits Gaza Refugee camp (95065)
8. Peace and Justice Network interviews Palestinian student (95065)
9. Competing claims for land on the Golan Heights (95065)
10. Yasser Arafat meets with Episcopal Peace and Justice Network (95065)
11. Grief over death of rector draws parish together (95068)

**Tentative mailing date for the next ENS release is May 2.**